



**For Immediate Release
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WHAT'S NEW IN THE PARKS SUMMER 2006

Summer is right around the corner, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has exciting recreation opportunities available throughout the Commonwealth. This year, DCR is also making it easier than ever to visit its parks, forests, trails, pools and beaches.

Recently, DCR launched its new Use Nature As Your Library program. Under this program, DCR is distributing free ParksPasses to public libraries, over 150 of which are already participating. Library patrons can check out the pass just as they would a book, and the pass entitles them to free use of any DCR day use facility, including popular spots such as Lake Cochituate, Horseneck Beach, the Mt. Greylock summit, and Walden Pond. People are encouraged to ask their local libraries to participate. Details on DCR's Annual ParksPass can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parkspass.htm>.

Since September 2005, the roughly one half of the Cape Cod Rail Trail, between Dennis and Brewster, has been closed. On June 23, this portion will be reopened, making one of the nation's most popular rail trails available in full once again for bikers, walkers, runners and in-line skaters. In addition to rail trails like the Cape Cod Rail Trail, DCR has many trails and paths for a wide range of activities, including hiking, walking, mountain biking, horseback riding and more. A full list of DCR trails can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/trails.htm>.

Virtually all DCR campgrounds have opened for the season, including the popular Nickerson State Park in Brewster. Nickerson sustained over \$1 million in damages from storms in December, but thanks to diligent staff, volunteers and the gracious contributions of local businesses, it opened on May 22 after only a brief delay. Information on DCR campgrounds can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/camping.htm>; for reservations, call 1-877-I-CAMP-MA.

DCR's groundbreaking, nationally-renowned Universal Access Program (UAP) will offer a wide variety of adaptive recreation opportunities this summer for people with disabilities and their friends and families. Activities will include cycling, kayaking, canoeing, rowing, hiking, camping, orienteering, interpretive programs and more. For more information about UAP and a list of summer adaptive recreation opportunities, see http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access/index.htm.

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